

Mr. Speaker, Presidents Aliyev and Kocharian, President Kocharian of Armenia, have been meeting on a number of occasions at multilateral meetings where both countries are represented, and I welcome these direct talks and hope that they will continue.

Azerbaijan and Armenia must normalize their relations with one another. They have to work for greater economic integration, development of infrastructure, and cooperation in other areas. This is the path that President Aliyev must be encouraged to follow. Indeed, the benefits to his country would be significant by opening up trade investment and assistance, that these benefits cannot begin to flow to Azerbaijan until Azerbaijan lifts its blockades against Armenia and Karabagh. I truly hope Mr. Aliyev will hear this message and not continue to believe he can play the oil card, trying to use Azerbaijan's presumed oil reserves as a way of getting the U.S. to sell out the principle behind section 907.

Mr. Speaker, last week at a White House ceremony to accept the credentials of Armenia's new ambassador to the United States, President Clinton pledged to aid Armenia to achieve a durable and mutually acceptable resolution to the conflict over Nagorno Karabagh. President Clinton also praised President Kocharian and President Aliyev for their willingness to act boldly for peace. He stressed America's commitment to helping Armenia-established democratic institutions and a market economy, and noted that the progress made by the Armenian people means that the U.S. can shift our assistance from humanitarian aid to development projects.

Unfortunately, the President's fiscal year 2001 budget proposal actually calls for a 27 percent reduction in assistance to Armenia. Congress will have an opportunity to reverse this, and I intend to work hard to make sure that the assistance is actually increased.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to renew my call for Armenia's President Robert Kocharian to be extended an invitation for a state visit to Washington. Last November 25, my colleagues in the House joined me in a bipartisan call on President Clinton to extend the invitation to President Kocharian.

I see one of my colleagues on the Republican side, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), is here and she was one of those.

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While President Aliyev's current visit is not an official State visit, President Aliyev has been here on a State visit. President Kocharian, who was elected nearly 2 years ago, has yet to be accorded this honor. To solidify the growing bonds between the U.S. and Armenia, I believe it is time for a State visit for President Kocharian.

#### PRIVATE BILL FOR VIRGINIA ANIKWATA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a private bill on behalf of two of my constituents, Virginia Anikwata and her 11-year-old daughter, Sharon. Virginia is a resident alien from Nigeria who faces imminent deportation back to her home country. Her daughter Sharon, who was born here in the United States and is a United States citizen, unfortunately faces constructive deportation with her mother since she has no other family or close friends here in the United States to care for her. Virginia's husband, and Sharon's father, died unexpectedly of cancer during the time that he was a student in this country 11 years ago when Sharon was a newborn baby.

What makes this case so compelling is that Sharon would surely be subjected to the horrendous practice of female genital mutilation if she and her mother were forced to return to Nigeria, since that is a universal practice in the community and clan where Virginia's family and her in-law family live. Her in-law family, who are entitled to make these decisions for a widow and a child in Nigeria, have made it clear that FGM, female genital mutilation, would be imposed upon Sharon.

We in Congress have found this practice so abhorrent that we have made FGM subject to criminal sanctions under Federal law. It would seem contrary to the intent of this law for our own government to place itself in the position of aiding and abetting the commission of FGM on Sharon by constructively deporting her to Nigeria when this conduct is subject to criminal prosecution here in the United States.

It also is important to note that Virginia and her daughter are model members of their community. Since her husband's untimely death, Virginia has been a law-abiding resident, supporting herself and her daughter by working as a practical nurse, paying taxes regularly, never seeking or expecting any form of government assistance and contributing to her community in significant ways through her work and religious observation. As a matter of fact, the daughter has been a model student. She is an honor student, very much involved in student activities.

Virginia and Sharon's case present a unique set of circumstances that deserve special recognition and treatment by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and by the U.S. Congress. There has been an overwhelming outpouring of interest and support for this case from members of the public, who have been horrified at the prospect of an American citizen child being

placed in the position of being constructively deported or permanently separated from her only surviving parent and family member here in the United States and subjected as well to the horrific practice of female genital mutilation.

I do not introduce private bills usually, but this is an exceptional case. By passing this private bill to provide permanent resident status to Virginia Anikwata, we can prevent a miscarriage of justice and save an American citizen from unimaginable cruelty.

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#### NATIONAL ORGAN DONOR MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, what if just one of us could dramatically benefit 80 people at one time? What if through just one event any one of us could literally save the life of a peer? Every single one of us has within ourselves the ability to effect positive changes by giving the gift of life.

Yesterday, this House passed a resolution recognizing the value and the need for organ donations. As we celebrate National Organ Donor Month, we need to remember the thousands of innocent families who will lose a loved one because no viable organ was available; and we must consider our options to help these families.

It has often been said that life is short and the nearly 60,000 patients who are currently waiting on this waiting list to receive these organs know just how precious time is. The waiting time for patients hanging on to life continues to expand. Unfortunately, the number of organs and the number of organ donors does not expand. Every 16 minutes, a name is added to the ever-growing waiting list of those who will wait transplantation. These facts translate into 13 people who die each and every day just because there are not enough organs available for them.

As I said, there are over 60,000 people awaiting organ transplants today; and, sadly, most of them will continue to wait for a tissue or an organ that may never come. Transplantation saves lives and it is important that we, as Members of Congress, do everything we can to raise awareness on the importance of organ and tissue donations and to increase the amount of donors throughout our land and especially in our districts.

Organ donation is as simple as filling out a donor card and indicating one's intent with their driver's license bureau. There are no limitations on who can donate. In fact, organ donors have included newborn babies all the way to senior citizens. However, the most important step that one can take is to discuss this important decision with their family members. It is essential